

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated May 15, 2008, having a shortened statutory period for response extended one month set to expire on September 15, 2008. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below. Claims 32-40 were pending in the application.

Statement of Substance of Interview

On August 29, 2008, a telephonic interview was held between Gero G. McClellan, Walter C. Grollitsch, Examiner Wartalowicz and Examiner Bos. The parties discussed the cited references Bland (2895747) and GB 824717. Claims 32 and 37 were also discussed. Additionally, on September 4, 2008, a telephonic interview was held between Walter C. Grollitsch and Examiner Wartalowicz.

An agreement was reached during the interviews. The arguments made herein are believed to be consistent with the agreement reached during the interviews. Allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Election/Restriction

The Examiner has withdrawn claims 39-40 from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. Applicants have cancelled claims 39-40 without prejudice.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 32-38 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. As discussed during the interview, the claims have been amended to overcome this rejection. Therefore, removal of the rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102/103

The Examiner rejected claims 32-36 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Bland

(2895747). The Examiner rejected claims 32-34 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over GB 824717. The Examiner rejected claims 35, 36 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over GB824717 in view of Bland. In response, Applicants have amended independent claims 32 and 37.

As amended, claim 32 includes the step of welding the joining tubular to the first and second tubulars in a manner whereby the continuous surface finish remains on the interior surface of the junction along a non-welded portion between the joining tubular and the end of each of the first and second tubulars. As amended, claim 37 includes the step of welding the treated joining tubular to each of the respective tubulars in a manner whereby a continuous protective coating remains along a non-welded portion between the two tubulars and the joining tubular. Bland and/or GB824717 fail to disclose these limitations. As agreed upon during the interviews, Bland merely discloses a connection between tubulars 11, 18 that includes a weld 13 on an interior surface of the connection (see Bland, Figure 2) and therefore Bland cannot disclose a continuous surface finish on an interior surface of the junction along a non-welded portion between the joining tubular and the end of each of the first and second tubulars as recited in the claims. As also agreed upon during the interviews, GB824717 merely discloses a connection between structural parts 1a, 1b that includes a weld 4b on an interior surface of the connection (see GB824717, Figure 3) and therefore GB824717 cannot disclose a continuous surface finish on an interior surface of the junction along a non-welded portion between the joining tubular and the end of each of the first and second tubulars as recited in the claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the 102(b) and 103(a) rejections of claims 32 and 37 be removed and allowance of the same. Additionally, the claims that depend from claims 32 and 37 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 32 and 37.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call Applicants' attorney at 336-643-3065.

Respectfully submitted,

/Gero G. McClellan, Reg. No. 44,227/

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